

PJB 1-4-11

DECOF, LEONARD

PROVIDENCE

 **DECOF, LEONARD**, 86, a resident of Providence, RI and Palm Beach Gardens, FL, died Friday, December 31, 2010. He was the beloved husband of Veda I. (Gross) Decof and the late Adele R. Decof. Born in Providence, he was a son of the late Morty and Rose (Metz) Decof. Mr. Decof



was a captain in the United States Marine Corp. and served during WWII in the Pacific Theatre Operations in Guam from

1943-1946 and also served state side in Parris Island, SC 1950-1952. Mr. Decof was a 1948 graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School in 1953.

Mr. Decof practiced law in Providence, Rhode Island for over 50 years and was recognized locally, nationally, and internationally for his accomplishments as a trial lawyer. He established the first law firm devoted to plaintiffs' causes in 1975. His son, Attorney Mark B. Decof, became his partner in 1980, and Mr. Decof practiced law until his death.

Mr. Decof was a member of the American Bar Association, Rhode Island Bar Association, and the R.I. Association for Justice. He was a Fellow and past Dean of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the International Society of Barristers, and a Fellow of the Inner Circle of Advocates. He was a Diplomat of the American Board of Trial Lawyers, and was a two time recipient of the RI Bar Assoc. Award of Merit for Outstanding Service

PROVIDENCE

of civil rights and antitrust. Mr. Decof established many precedents, both in RI and nationally, in the areas of medical malpractice, product liability, insurance, punitive damages, pharmaceutical liability, antitrust, civil rights, and sports litigation.

Mr. Decof was an avid golfer and sports enthusiast. He combined his two passions of golf and law by representing several of the world's largest golf equipment manufacturers, Ping, Callaway, and Nike Golf, as well as professional golfers such as Adam Scott, Greg Norman, Sam Snead, Billy Casper and Gardner Dickenson. He served as General Counsel for the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and was the lead lawyer in an antitrust case against the PGA Tour and the United States Golf Association on behalf of Karsten Manufacturing Co., the maker of Ping golf clubs. As a result of his legal work in the world of professional golf, Mr. Decof was named one of the ten most powerful people in the world of golf by Golf Digest and Golf International Magazine.

In 1991, he was asked by Governor Bruce Sundlun to represent the State of Rhode Island to prosecute the major civil claims arising from the credit union failure and crisis in Rhode Island. On behalf of DEPCO, he recovered hundreds of millions of dollars and was publicly and officially commended for his work by Governor Lincoln Almond in February 2001. In 1986, Mr. Decof was chosen by the Presiding Justice of the Superior Court of RI and by unanimous vote of all the Justices of the Superior Court to serve as special prosecutor for the investigation of certain conduct of the Office of the